

# PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

## PART 8

### "PROCESSING FOR PEACE"

As we resume this winding series, there are many truths we can now reflect upon, and many more we could share upon in greater detail. The divine process of purging and purification is a many-faceted subject, one that could never fully be exhausted in a thousand volumes. But suffice it to say that despite the failures of men, the fury of flesh, the storms of life, and the intentions of devils, **GOD'S PURPOSE SHALL SURELY RETURN TO IT'S PORT OF PREDETERMINED DESTINY**; it shall certainly find it's harbor of ordination, once it has successfully completed it's circuit!

We read in Isa. 55:11, "So shall My Word be that goeth out of My mouth: **IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT WILL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE**, and shall **PROSPER** in the thing whereto I send it". Some two thousand years ago, because of the disturbed and confounded condition of the world, the restless sea of humanity, God released His Word of reconciliation. And when He did, that Word was "made flesh, and dwelt among men"! As He entered into this world, He did so with a mission, which was announced at His birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and **ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN**" (Lk. 2:14). This was the purpose that prompted Him to action; and this was His motive for coming into this tumultuous, chaotic, war-torn world of men. **HE CAME TO BE A PEACEMAKER!** He came to bring peace to the world, to settle the raging conflicts of men, to give rest to the wearied masses of mankind who were "tossed with a tempest, and not comforted". This was His highest priority, His preeminent intention. Therefore, you would have thought that He would have immediately set out to accomplish this... possibly by cooperating with and negotiating agreements with those who were in opposition, by proposing compromises to compensate for the Commandments, or by proclaiming a gospel that would unify the people with the existing order of government. However, during the days of His flesh, His approach was much different! It appeared that rather than making peace, He brought further divisions! By His own admission, seemingly contrary to His declared purpose, He said, "Think **NOT** that I am come to send **PEACE** on earth, but **A SWORD**" (Matt. 10:34)! But how could this be? How could this harmonize with the heavenly proclamation? Ah, the marvel of this mystery is that before there could be peace **ON** earth, there first had to be **WAR**; the Sword must be drawn, a separation must occur, and a "slaying" of all that would oppose His absolute rule. (Many at that time misunderstood His message, and took His Words literally; assuming that He advocated violence as a means of accomplishing His agenda... as many do today)! But the kind of separation He spake of had to start among the people; there had to be a "firstfruits" people who were drawn unto Him, and set apart for His holy purpose... in whom He could impart His Spirit, and in whom "the sword could pierce their souls", to put to death every tendency toward selfishness, autonomy and independence in them (the root causes why He

divorced Israel of old). Once they had come to abandon their own efforts to "save" themselves, ceasing to do things THEIR WAY, once they had experienced true UNION with their Bridegroom, He could establish His PEACE IN THEIR EARTH! They would be His ambassadors in the world, OUTWARDLY MANIFESTING AN INTERNAL STATE OF KINGDOM LIFE, that they might be His source of PEACE ON EARTH! Therefore, the "Word" did not return VOID, but most certainly accomplished that which He pleased! Unbeknown to the world, He laid the ground work for universal peace and harmony to spread throughout the entire creation, "in the dispensation of the fullness of time", by initially sowing His Seed in one hundred and twenty "earthen vessels" on the Day of Pentecost!

Beloved, we can rest assured that if He has sent His Word into the world, it will accomplish His objective; and if He has sent His Spirit into our hearts, it is that it may accomplish that which HE pleases (He is taking a Bride for "Isaac"). Knowing that it is our FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE to give us the Kingdom" (Lk. 12:32), we have the promise that HE SHALL ALSO CAUSE IT TO PROSPER in the thing whereto He sends it! He shall see to it that just as He has initiated His Kingdom rule within us, He shall also cause it to INCREASE, to EXPAND, "conquering, and to conquer", until ALL THAT IS WITHIN US BLESSES HIS HOLY NAME! Then shall we know in glorious reality the truth Isaiah spake of, when he prophesied, "OF THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND PEACE there shall be NO END" (Isa. 9:7)! Wherever HE governs, wherever HE reigns (and ONLY THERE), is there any true and lasting PEACE! (This is the truth He is now teaching us; and it is this truth that ALL NATIONS shall ultimately come to understand)! No matter how long it might take, what method He may have to employ to accomplish it, or what route He may bring us by, God's Will shall ultimately prevail (for "who can resist His will"?); He will bring down the impudent, unruly, and insubordinate image of Adam! And this wondrous EXPANSION PROGRAM shall continue to grow as "a great mountain", until finally, it fills the whole earth (Dan. 2:35)! Praise God for it! Our hope is summed up in this prophetic word: "And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW UNTO IT. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for OUT OF ZION SHALL GO FORTH THE LAW, AND THE WORD OF THE LORD FROM JERUSALEM. And HE SHALL JUDGE AMONG THE NATIONS, and rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE" (Isa. 2:2-4)! What a promise for the latter times! It SHALL come to pass!

## UNDERSTANDING THE REVELATION

In our last installment, we elaborated a little more from the book of Revelation --- and the principles found therein. One point we have endeavored to stress is that this is a book of RELEVANCE; it pertains to every believer, in every age. (One of the safest rules for interpreting Revelation is to check and balance every view by the life and teachings of

Christ in the Gospels. If it cannot be found in the Gospels, or confirmed in the Epistles, we can conclude it to be speculative!) The Revelation is meant to bring comfort and light to the suffering saint... whether he be in an hour of temptation, trial, or testing, or in a time of chastening, correction, or discipline. Regardless of the circumstances he might find himself in, or what phase of this refining process he might be passing through, there is hope: **THE CHRIST IN US SHALL ULTIMATELY BE TRIUMPHANT!** This firm confidence held steadfast to the end is vital to our understanding, as well as to our reigning victorious along with Him! **HE IS IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, REGARDLESS OF WHAT IT IS! HE IS ALWAYS IN CHARGE!**

While many end-time students "major" in minors, overemphasizing and magnifying the lesser characters found in Revelation (as if they possessed the greater importance), the main Subject is, and always shall be **CHRIST. HE IS PREEMINENT!** Everything and everyone else mentioned throughout the book are there merely to show their relationship to Him (this is certainly not to say that there is no value in understanding them, but rather that we might rightly comprehend how they relate to Him). With this properly in mind, we will continue our consideration of two antithetical "women".. Babylon and Jerusalem, and the characters connected to them; how we relate to them; how they relate to Christ; and what their inevitable destinies shall be.

### IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE

We discovered that while John himself was enduring great tribulation "for the Word of the Lord, and for the testimony of Jesus a **DOOR** suddenly opened into the heavenly sphere; and he was privileged to behold the manner(s) in which Christ subdues all things unto Himself, as seen from the spiritual perspective. Now, as we have said, this experience was not given merely for the edification of John and those of his generation. Of a truth, **EVERY** man's pathway can be found therein (at one point or another), when once "the eyes of his understanding" have been enlightened! It goes without saying that there is a tremendous work being wrought in the hearts of God's elect, in the church in general, as well as in the world at large! It is a work so great, so universal, and yet so intimately personal; so generally basic to all, and yet so profoundly intricate, that He alone can perform it! Who else could keep track of all the detailed life experiences of every single individual, interweave them together with those of others (not to mention all those of previous ages), and cause them to work together for good?

The structure of the book of Revelation can rightly be viewed from several antitypical perspectives; the seven days of creation week, the annual Feast Days, the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, etc. It can likewise be divided into three separate "mini-visions"... climaxing at the same point (yet overlapping one another), but seen from different positions (chapters 7, 15, & 21).

Because each of these visions represent various forms of God's dealings, it is not necessary to study it from a chronological order. Once we determine our personal location in this drama, we can better understand God's particular purpose in the process!

We have come to see that John's Spirit-led journey began in the Throne Room, in the heavenly "Holy of Holies", in the center-most place of God's Presence (chapter 4). Since this is where all things in the beginning of creation emanated from, it is therefore fitting that from here this inward exploration of the new creation should likewise find its start. It is in the inner-sanctum of the tabernacle proper, in the place where God takes up residence, that we get a glimpse of the activities that transpire behind the veil... revealing a symbolic portrayal of LIFE IN THE SPIRIT. The appearance of the rainbow over the Throne shows that it portrays Kingdom Life, NEW COVENANT LIFE, life that is totally submissive to, and ordered by the Spirit. It reveals the realm where there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1); where ALL THINGS ARE IN HARMONY WITH CHRIST.

Every detail has an important part to play in conveying the whole picture, but here we would draw your attention to two very important symbolic figures. First, there are twenty four elders, seated upon twenty four thrones in the midst of the Throne; and secondly, there are the four "beasts" (as the King James Version renders it), "full of eyes within". What do they signify? Well, from the perspective of God's predestinated purpose in our lives, we can see that these "elders", because they wear "crowns" as do kings, and there are twenty four of them in number (just as there were twenty four courses in the Levitical Priesthood), strongly witness to *our calling and election to the Royal Priesthood* (I Peter 2:9); "the order of Melchisedec", if you please (Heb. 7)! They serve as the reflection of that corporate company of over-comers (referred to in 2:7, 11, 17, 26-29; 3:5-6, 12-13, 21-22), called out from among the "seven churches" (the whole conglomerate assembly depicted in chapters 2 & 3), who are destined to rule and reign with Christ! For by their own admission, they say with one voice unto the Lamb, "thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and HATH MADE US UNTO OUR GOD KINGS AND PRIESTS; AND WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH" (4:9-10)! It is therefore apparent that they must have a relation to the realm of mankind, since they were taken from among men! They answer to the joint-title, "KINGS AND PRIESTS"... because though "as men" they were CREATED, for this purpose were they MADE. They represent "a kingdom of priests" in the making... for in due season, they SHALL reign on the earth! (To the measure and degree we move in our calling and election, we are reigning NOW. But that a greater fulfillment of this is yet to be experienced should be obvious to all who have any vision at all of the glorious age to come)! What is used here as symbolism (showing our PREDESTINATED PURPOSE in God's plan) shall ultimately become SUBSTANCE! God has ordained it!

But what about the four "beasts"? As we examine their description, we can readily see that they correspond to the revelation of Christ, THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS CHARACTER, as seen in His humanity! (No doubt, a comparison can be made between these, and the "four living creatures" seen in Ezekiel's vision; in which each had the face of A MAN, A LION, AN OX, and AN EAGLE. Interestingly enough, the characteristics of each of these creatures can be suited to Christ in the four Gospels! Luke portrayed Him as "the Son of MAN", emphasizing His identity with humanity; in Mark's Gospel, He is THE OX, the meek and lowly servant of God, and the sacrifice for man. Matthew describes Him as "the son of David", who is "THE LION of the tribe of Judah", rising up to take the prey in lion-like aggressiveness; and in John's depiction, He is THE FLYING

EAGLE, "even the Son of man which is in heaven", soaring to incredible heights in the spirit realm)! As we make a personal application, however, we see that this heavenly "Throne Room" corresponds to THE REDEEMED SPIRIT OF MAN; the "LAMB" speaks of THE NATURE OF CHRIST in the heart of the believer; and the "BEASTS" refer to THE EXPRESSION OF HIS CHARACTER from the heart! Just as we have previously shown the "beasts" which rise out of the earth and sea to bespeak THE NATURE OF ADAM, as it is expressed through the presently unconverted SOUL (and thereby apprehending the use of the BODY to further personify that image), these four "beasts" in the midst of the Throne speak of the display of the character of Christ potentially within the SPIRIT of every believer!

In order for us to bring this symbolic scenario into a clearer perspective, it would seem wise to show the important connection between NATURE and EXPRESSION. Nature would be defined as the inherent qualities found in a person, the natural inclinations one possesses. It describes the foundational traits of an individual; it speaks of WHAT HE IS BY CLASSIFICATION. EXPRESSION, however, is that which springs out of nature; it is the communication of nature, and the manifestation of nature... nature's means of revealing itself. Nature without expression is passive; it has no vehicle by which to convey the evidence of it's kind. Therefore, it is vital that expression be given to nature, in order that there might be a revelation. And this, in turn, requires the cooperation of the WILL! There is no other way!

#### TWO TYPES OF "BEASTS"

It should be obvious that there is a difference in the "beasts" in HEAVEN, from those found in the EARTH and SEA. They are not the same! To draw a line of dissimilarity between these two types of "beasts", we need but consider the Greek renderings of their original words. First, the word used for the "beasts" seen in the midst of the Throne is "ZOON" (# 2226 in Strong's), which generally means, "a live thing, i.e. an animal". It comes from a primary verb, meaning, "to live, be lively, alive, or quickened". This, more accurately translated, should be "living", or quickened "creatures" (as it is properly recorded in the book of Ezekiel). On the other hand, the word John originally employed to describe the "beasts" which rise from the earth and sea is "THERION" (# 2342). It means, "a dangerous animal:-- (venomous, wild) beast". Clearly, the difference is IN THE NATURE!

Why is this so important? Well, to read of these "beasts" in the Authorized, or King James translation, one might make the honest mistake of assuming they were all of the same category or species. But when we understand that there is a definite difference made between them in the original language (just as God, on the sixth day, specifically made a distinction between the domesticated animals, and the wild, rebellious beasts of the field), we can more readily differentiate what is a characteristic of THE FLESH, and what is of THE SPIRIT! They are not to be confused!

By this, it should be painstakingly clear that every expression, every action, or every reaction that occurs, be it in the world, in the church, or in us, emulates one or the other

of these two types of "creatures"; and every manifestation exhibits the nature from whence it comes. Whether we immediately recognize it or not, it will either be an exposition of the flesh, or of the Spirit; it will either bring out and magnify the nature of Christ, or the Adamic nature! It will either be soulish in origin, or spiritual!

## TWO "CREATURELY" TENDENCIES

As we behold this episode evolving around the Throne, we see that the natural tendency of the "living creatures~ is to give honor and glory and thanks to Him who sits upon the Throne; to testify of Him, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"; to bow in reverence and submission, and give their allegiance to Him. These "quickened" ones are seen to FALL DOWN BEFORE THE LAMB, acknowledging that HE ALONE IS WORTHY, or qualified to pass judgment on any matter (since His meek and lowly mannerism has proven victorious)! Therefore, they act in accord with the Lamb's will, moving out of His nature, responding only as He would in every situation, thereby glorifying Him who sits upon the Throne.

However, the tendency of the wild "beasts" is to RISE UP against the Lamb, to make war with the Lamb, and attempt to overthrow His judgments. Why? Because it is their nature to do **50!** These "beastly" tendencies are not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE (Rom. 8:7)! Because they derive their "power, and seat, and great authority" from another source (i.e. the "great RED Dragon" 12:3; 13:2), they are in constant rebellion to the gentle ways of the Lamb!

Beloved, may we say that in any given situation, in any type of confrontation, because we still possess two natures within us, we have the potential to either conduct ourselves like A LAMB or like A DRAGON! When confronted with a temptation of any sort, and we are called upon to make a decision, our reaction will either come from willingly FALLING DOWN in yieldedness and surrender to the Lamb, "acknowledging Him in all our ways" , and maintaining a gentle spirit of submission to His choice of action (whatever that may be)... or from instinctively RISING UP in our human reasoning or emotions, expressing our own personal opinions and feelings, according to the self-serving interests of the flesh! When we give place to the Lamb, "humbling ourselves in the sight of the Lord", then in due season, He "lifts us UP" above the matter (Jam. 4:10; I Pet. 5:6); He imparts ample anointing to wisely deal with the issue at hand, that we might resist all fleshly inclinations. He faithfully takes care of the situation, supplying all our needs "according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus", as a loving Husband cares for His Bride. But when we give rise to the Beast (be it in the form of pride, lust, vanity, revenge, anger, jealousy, or any other work of the flesh), expressing his unrestrained behavior, we further the Harlot's agenda, becoming a partaker of her sins... and He has to bring us DOWN! It's as simple as that! Therefore, it may well be said that THE WAY UP IS FIRST DOWN (in humility); BUT THE WAY DOWN IS UP (in pride)!

A BEAST --- IN "SHEEP'S CLOTHING"!

There are many times when "beastly" manifestations take on a "righteous" appearance... to deceive the very elect, if possible. The Beast which arose out of the earth was said to have "two horns like a LAMB, but spake like a DRAGON" (13:11). In other words, it had the appearance of a lamb at first glance, but the message he conveyed was really that of a dragon! False prophets in general, with their damnable doctrines of devils, whose emphasis is always on themselves (all the while CLAIMING to be exalting Jesus), certainly fall into this category. As Jesus warned, "many false prophets shall ARISE, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:11). We have seen this to be true... and accelerating in magnitude as we near the end of this present age. But it is amazing how many of these lying "beasts", through cunning and subtlety, find their way right into the thoughts and lives of every one of us... in the form of VAIN IMAGINATIONS, FALSE FEELINGS, and the many misconceptions of the mind! Of a truth, these "false prophets" appear in the "dust" of our carnal minds, and from the "great deep" (Gr. "abyss") of our soulish emotions! While attempting to disguise themselves as godly attributes and attitudes (i.e. "righteous indignation", "spiritual liberty", "authoritative dominion", "free love", etc.), by sometimes looking very much like the truth, they seek to find acceptance from us through their "lying signs and wonders", and thereby obtain the "rights" to "free speech"! If they can convince us to give them expression, gaining the strength and support of our wills, then we will eventually justify and defend these beasts "in sheep's clothing"... and they will have accomplished their objective!

We should note also that all that dwell on the earth (that is, who's interests are on earthly concerns), would WORSHIP the Beast. The word "worship" literally means, WORTH-SHIP, or the giving of honor and reverence to one who is deemed WORTHY. While the "living creatures" consider the Lamb alone to be worthy, turning all the attention toward Him, and by their testimony inspiring like obedience round about, the "beasts" loudly proclaim their own worthiness (and in turn, causes "all the world" to worship the Red Dragon which empowers them; Rev. 13:4)! They seek to leave a powerfully persuasive impression, that we might deem them worthy of expression!

In highly spiritual language, this graphically describes the difference between being governed by the Spirit, and yielding to the flesh. Unless we are "dwelling in the heavens", "in the midst of the Throne", seeing all things from Christ's point of view, we can easily be deceived! Human discernment alone is powerless to differentiate between these diverse forces of nature. It takes a pure and intimate relationship with Christ Himself to truly recognize the inward impressions of His Spirit from those of the great impostor!

For certain, these two are at enmity with one another; they are diametrically opposed in every way! Paul put it this way... "I mean this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will not fulfill the desires of your lower nature. THAT NATURE SETS IT'S DESIRES AGAINST THE SPIRIT, WHILE THE SPIRIT FIGHTS AGAINST IT. They are in conflict with one another so that what you will to do you cannot do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law... IF THE SPIRIT IS THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE, LET THE SPIRIT ALSO DIRECT OUR COURSE" (Gal. 5:16-18, 25; NEB). How well we have learned the truth of this. Two natures, both striving to captivate our wills, and govern the paths we take. Before our initial conversion experience, there was nothing

within us to oppose our waywardness, and therefore we freely walked "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). But when Christ ascended the Throne of our spirits, He did so with the express purpose of raising our consciousness up into that heavenly realm, as well (Eph. 2:5-6)! He declared war on the flesh, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God", that there might be a full cooperation in our members to manifest His glory! Therefore, we are admonished that if we derive and EXPERIENCE our life in the Spirit, then our EXPRESSIONS should likewise come from the Spirit! We should naturally and willingly be led by the Spirit, waiting patiently on Him to direct our course, that we might EXHIBIT the indwelling Christ life.

This tremendous "tug-of-war" going on within us is a common experience among believers --- and Paul was no exception. Just listen to his own testimony: "For I know that nothing good lodges within me --- in my unspiritual nature, I mean --- for though the will to do good is there, the deed is not. The good which I want to do, I fail to do; but what I do is the wrong which is against my will; and if what I do is against my will, clearly it is no longer I who am the agent, but sin that has it's lodging in me. I discover this principle, then: that when I want to do the right, only the wrong is in my reach. In my inmost self I delight in the law of God, but I perceive that there is in my bodily members a different law, fighting against the law that my reason approves and making me a prisoner under the law that is in my members, the law of sin. Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death? GOD ALONE, through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 7:15-25, NEB)! Paul had come to the inevitable conclusion that in spite of his own efforts to abide by the law, he was powerless to conquer the "beast" within, and release the life of the Lamb! His hope, therefore, was IN GOD, AND GOD ALONE! He knew that unless Christ, by His indwelling Spirit, should deal with the flesh nature (in whatever means He saw necessary), he was destined to a life of failure and defeat! CHRIST IN HIM WAS HIS ONLY HOPE OF GLORY!

Truly, as Jeremiah stated, "The heart is THE MOST DECEITFUL OF ALL THINGS, desperately sick; who can fathom it? I, the Lord, search the mind and test the heart, requiting man for his conduct, and as his deeds deserve" (Jer. 17:9-10, NEB). While we generally tend to judge ourselves very favorably, thinking of ourselves as being spiritually balanced and healthy, we often deceive ourselves. But the Christ in us is steadily searching our souls and testing our wills; He is probing into the depths of our being, bringing to our attention our "desperately sick" condition, and offering healing and deliverance to us as oft as we will accept what He prescribes. HE IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN! We may not always like what He has to show us, and we may not enjoy His method of treatment (His Sword can be very painful to the soul); but His diagnosis is always accurate!

Continuing in chapter 8 of Romans, we read, "The conclusion of the matter is this: there is NO CONDEMNATION for those who are united with Christ Jesus, because in Christ Jesus the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death. What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it of all potency, God has done:

by sending His own Son in a form like that of our own sinful nature, and as a sacrifice for sin, HE HAS PASSED JUDGMENT AGAINST SIN IN THAT VERY NATURE, so that the commandment of the law may find fulfillment in us, whose conduct, no longer under the control of our lower nature, is directed by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4, NEB). What a detailed analysis of the operation of the Spirit in us! And how plain this describes the present ministry of Christ in the inner man! From His Throne in our spirits, He is even now passing judgment against sin in the flesh, "opening the book, and loosing the seals thereof", that our conduct, "no longer under the control of the lower nature, might be directed of the Spirit"! Hallelujah! He is subduing all things unto Himself! This obviously is a work we cannot accomplish in ourselves; for only the Lamb is qualified to do this! He who sees all things as they are, is working all things after the counsel of His own will, to the praise of His glory"!

### "THE KINGS OF THE EARTH"

We have come to understand that our conversion experience is not an immediate occurrence... it is a process. While it would have been desirable on our parts for Christ to have instantly and totally transformed us from our old condition, and into the fullness of His intended state, we have found that according to the depth of our surrender, and according to the wise designs of Him who has ordained our change, we experience the inworkings of deliverance. In order for change to come, He must have our undivided attention, and the total surrender of our wills. And beloved, He knows exactly how to obtain both! As we have read, the heart of man is the most deceitful thing in the world. From it, all the works of iniquity spring forth, and manifest themselves (Matt. 15:19). Often, when we feel that we have totally yielded ourselves unto God, there are still facets of our character, THE RULING FORCES OF OUR WILLS ("the KINGS of the earth") that seek to hide themselves among "the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" of our humanity, so to speak, from "the face of Him who sits upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15-17). While we are convinced we have given Him our all, He shows us that we have held back a portion of ourselves. Therefore, Christ makes a diligent search within us, moving "every mountain and island out of its place", disrupting the foundations of our "earth", uncovering hidden motives, secret sins, insubordinate attitudes, etc. until He has thoroughly exposed our true condition! We can be sure that what survives "the loosing of the seals", the "sounding of the trumpets" will deal with; and what may escape "the trumpets", "the vials of wrath" will destroy! One way or another, God will accomplish His objective! He will get our attention, consume the spirit of harlotry in us, and break our stubborn wills! He WILL be triumphant in His cause!

From the outset of Revelation, Jesus is identified as "THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH" (1:5), the reigning Monarch of the new creation, though, for a season, this does not appear to be the case. We read in Rev. 17:18 that the Great Whore "reigneth over the kings of the earth". They are inclined to "commit fornication" with her, to "live deliciously" with her, by giving their affections in support of her harlotrous ways, along with their power and strength to the beast she rides upon (Rev. 17:13). It is a proven fact that whatever has not been previously brought into subjection to the Lordship of Christ in us will lend its strength to the advancement and promotion of Babylon! Until the defiant

will of man is thoroughly dealt with, these "kings of the earth" will set themselves against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, "LET US BREAK THEIR BANDS ASUNDER, AND CAST AWAY THEIR CORDS FROM US" (Psa. 2:2)! They will attempt to reject His governing authority, and in doing so, reveal their relationship with the Harlot! But He that sitteth in the heavens merely laughs; He finds it amusing that Man's puny will should contest His sovereignty! Therefore, He sets them in derision...by speaking to them in His wrath, and vexing them in His sore displeasure (Psa. 2:4-5). He breaks them with a rod of iron, and dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel (v. 9)! And afterward, He admonishes them, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. KISS THE SON, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are they that put their trust in Him" (vs. 10-12)! As we said, He knows just how to destroy our affinity with Babylon, to break our rebellious wills, and cause them to gladly turn their affections toward Him! KISS THE SON --- abandon your wills to Him!

### "ARMAGEDDON"

There are times when, because of extremely deep-seated areas in our souls, God will arrange special circumstances to draw all the remaining "kings of the earth" out of hiding (some things can remain buried from our attention for years; still others may not be recognized as being necessarily evil). We may spiritually call these times "Armageddon", for it is when God removes the hedge, "dries up the River Euphrates", and gives opportunity for our real adversaries to reveal themselves. (The Euphrates, strategically speaking, served as a natural boundary of protection for Israel. It provided a sense of security from their enemies. Therefore, the drying up of the Euphrates would leave them vulnerable to attack)! During these ordained seasons, we oftentimes struggle to understand why God has allowed things to be so, why we are so weak and defenseless to the aggressions of the flesh, both within and without. We question whether or not His Presence has departed from us, and left us as a prey for the "beasts" to devour! But what may appear to be a breach in the Covenant on God's part is actually His working in us toward the furtherance of establishing peace! You see, as long as there is any form of rebellion in us, no matter how slight or insignificant it may seem, it will surface at "Armageddon"! And this is precisely His strategy! When we are surrounded on every hand, pressured by hostile forces which threaten our spiritual lives, and we realize that all hope for human deliverance is in vain, we are then caused to cry out to our heavenly Husband for deliverance! When once He has brought our enemies into the light, and has opened our eyes to their true nature; when once He has stripped away all of the attractiveness of the flesh, and we see it's vileness until we utterly loathe it, then He is able to deal to it the death blow! As a result, BABYLON FALLS, THE BEAST IS CAST OUT, THE DRAGON IS BOUND, and THE KINGS OF THE EARTH are reformed! Whereas they once gave their power and strength in support of Babylon (the whorish state of independence), they now bring their glory and honor to New Jerusalem (a virginal relationship; 21:24)! Their affections and allegiances have been redirected to honor the Lamb, looking to Him as their source of light, and hope of glory! When this state is arrived, He experientially becomes "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF

LORDS" (Rev. 17:14; 19:16)! Hallelujah! Then "the kingdoms of this world" (all that is within us) become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and His Christ" (Rev. 11:15)!

We all say that we want deliverance from our "beastly" bondages and associations, and from our involvement with Babylon's independent nature, that separates us from God.. .but are we willing to go to "Armageddon" for it? When we pray for God to totally possess us, to receive us as a Bridegroom would His Bride, do we consider the fact that He may place us in situations where we are completely helpless to defend ourselves, in order that He might produce in us a pure heart of absolute dependence on Him, and Him alone? Has Babylon "fallen" in us to the point that we no longer desire to commit fornication with her, but rather, to be "caught up" together with Christ into the secret place of intimacy? Are we ready to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth"; to "trust in the Lord with all our hearts... and in all our ways acknowledge Him, that He might direct our paths"; or do we want to reserve that right for ourselves? Can we honestly say in all points, "Nevertheless, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT"?

Beloved, in this hour, God is "sifting out the hearts of men before His Judgment Seat"; He is "troubling our waters", and examining us as never before! Be it known that as the roiling process continues, Babylon's streams shall be turned into pitch (Isa. 34:9); and those who find their association with her shall be given over to gross darkness. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). This is a description of dense confusion of mind, vexation of spirit, and reprobation reserved for those who refuse Him. But the river of life that flows from Jerusalem shall become clear as crystal (Rev. 22:1)! Praise God! Those who identify with her shall experience a clarity of understanding into God's divine purposes, and a keen sensitivity to the leadership of the Spirit! Because of their response to adversity, the roilings will produce a purity within, an inner state of absolute submission that Christ is pleased to join Himself to! For them, the hour shall come when the roilings shall cease, the internal turmoil shall settle, and "the PEACE OF GOD which passeth all (human) understanding" will pervade their entire being! Truly, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God!! Hallelujah!

to be continued...